

UPPER YALE PARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES: On the east by 1500 East on the south by Yale Avenue (1080 South) angling in a northeasterly direction to Yalecrest Avenue (1075 South) to Military Drive (1745 East), on the north by 900 South and angling southwesterly along Diestel Road to Bonneview Drive (1051 South) back to 1500 East.

MAP:

The recommended upper Yale Park Conservation District is comprised of portions of upper Yale Avenue, Yalecrest Avenue, Military Drive, Diestel Road and Bonneview Drive between 1500 East and angling northeast to 900 South. The bulk of the district includes a section of the Upper Yale Park Subdivision developed in the late 1920s by the Ashton-Jenkins Company. Portions of Military Drive and Diestel Road north of Michigan Avenue were developed during the late 1920s and 1930s and are part of Douglas Park, a large east bench subdivision initially opened in 1911 by the Hubbard Investment Company. Most of the residential stock backs onto Miller Park, a city park containing Red Butte Creek.

The area is highly cohesive visually, with an attractive and distinctive streetscape. It possesses a concentration of excellent architectural representations of Period Revival styles such as the English Tudor and Colonial Revival, and is historically notable in association with the well known Ashton-Jenkins Company. A number of houses in the district are connected to historically significant individuals of the period.

Set back on the gently inclined shelf of Salt Lake's east bench, Upper Yale Park is characterized by winding streets, lined with cast stone electric lamp posts on Bonneview Drive, Yale Avenue, Yalecrest Avenue and Military Drive. Lots are large and attractively landscaped and the stately houses reflect a consistency of style and quality. Residences are principally of the English Tudor style, with a few representations of the Colonial Revival. All possess individualized variations in architectural detail.

Lots within the proposed district back up to the gulch of Red Butte Creek on both banks. Densely wooded with native streamside trees and shrubs, the gulch provides a secluded backdrop to homes in the area. It has been developed as a city park - Miller Park, named after Lee Charles Miller (see below) who donated a portion of the land, containing foot paths, stone fireplaces and picnicing areas. However maintenance of the facilities and grounds has been neglected over the years and the care has fallen into a state of disrepair.

Developed by the same firm (Ashton-Jenkins) that earlier developed the adjacent Yale Park district, the ambience of Upper Yale Park reflects the popular styles of the 1920s and is therefore more closely akin to the nearby Normandie Heights subdivision developed concurrently by Gaddis Investment Company. Opened c. 1924 by Ashton-Jenkins Company, Upper Yale Park developed rapidly, most houses within the proposed conservation district being built between 1925-28, excepting Diestel Road which was built up during the 1930s.

Partners Edward M. Ashton and Edward E. Jenkins (see Yale

Park recommended historic district writeup) were prominent developers of Salt Lake City's east bench. Their first property in the area, just east of Liberty Park was opened c. 1908, followed in subsequent years by Liberty Heights, Yale Park (1913) and Upper Yale Park. Ashton-Jenkins was also active as one of several realty companies involved with sales in Gaddis Investment Company's Normandie Heights subdivision. Promotion of Upper Yale Park evidently was low key, though occasional, small advertisements did appear in local newspapers.

Purchasers of lots and houses in the area were of a similar social and professional stature to those buying in Yale Park and Normandie Heights. A large Tudor house of split fieldstone, designed by architect Walter E. Ware, was built in 1929 at 1607 Yalecrest Avenue for Lee Charles and Minnie Viele Miller. Ware a prominent Salt Lake architect who commenced practicing in the city in the 1890s and who was later joined by Alberto Owen Treganza (until 1922) continued to practice until 1949. His career as a designer spanned nearly sixty years.

Both Lee Charles and Minnie Viele Miller were highly respected in the Salt Lake business community. Mr. Miller was a partner with his father-in-law Abram Viele, of New York City, in Miller and Viele Loan Company, established in Salt Lake City in 1896. Miller later became sole owner of the firm. A believer in the security of irrigated agricultural lands, Miller specialized in farm loans, financing numerous irrigation systems including a number of reservoirs in southern Utah. Particularly active in the vicinity of Richfield, Sevier County, L. C. Miller was also involved in projects as far afield as Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada and eastern Oregon. His firm became the largest farm mortgage organization in the intermountain west.

Minnie Viele Miller was of a stature equal to that of her husband. Owner of Thousand Springs Stock Farm on Idaho's Snake River, she imported and raised pure bred Hampshire sheep and Guernsey cattle, producing high grade stock for the benefit of western farmers. Her Guernsey herds were leaders in the nation, winning "a long line of prizes and trophy cups." Mrs. Miller served as president of the American Hampshire Sheep Association and was a trustee of Utah State Agricultural College, Logan. Following the death of her husband in 1930, she also assumed the operation of Miller & Viele Loan Company.

Elsewhere in Upper Yale Park, attorney, businessman and sports figure R. Verne McCullough purchased a Colonial Revival house at 1529 Yale Avenue. Mr. McCullough, a former A.A.U. wrestling champion, owned McCullough's Arena on 900 South between State Street and Main Street, site of boxing and wrestling matches during the 1930s. He also built up a chain of bowling alleys and for five years owned and operated the Crystal Palace supermarket chain. Another McCullough property was the Dooly Building (since

demolished) designed in 1890 by the famous Chicago architect Louis Sullivan. As an attorney McCullough served as assistant to Salt Lake County Attorney Arthur Moreton and subsequently (1923-25) served on the appropriations and judiciary committees of the state legislature.

Other notable residents of Upper Yale Park included wrestler Ira Dern (1600 Yale) winner of the national heavyweight title in 1919 and the light heavyweight title in 1926. Dern was one of the original developers of the old Black Rock Beach Resort on the Great Salt Lake, and at the time of his death in 1957 owned Sunset Beach Resort. Frank M. Allen, founder of Frank M. Allen Steel Company, resided in an English Tudor house built in 1929 at 1615 Yalecrest Avenue. Allen was president of the Steel Engineers Company and the Engineering and Steel Corporation of Utah, two firms which grew out of Allen's original company founded in 1917.

Various contractors were involved in the development of Upper Yale Park, including Bowers Building and Investment Company, Samuel Campbell, Vincent-Peterson Company and G. Maurice Romney, son of prominent builder Gaskell Romney (see Normandie Heights Conservation District). Samuel H. Worthen and Sorenson Building Company appear to have been active in the area. Worthen, a longtime building contractor in Salt Lake City, resided for many years at 2305 South 300 East. Sorenson Building Company was most likely associated with contractor Fred A. Sorenson who built his own residence at 1049 Military Drive in about 1927. A builder since 1908, Sorenson was active until only a few years prior to his death in 1979 at age 88.

As an area of outstanding architectural examples of large Period Revival homes of the English Tudor and Colonial Revival styles, with a cohesive and distinctive ambience and historically noteworthy residents and developers, this section of the Upper Yale Park and Douglas Park subdivisions is uniquely qualified for designation as a Salt Lake City Conservation District.

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